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ABSTRACT

The premise used in the development of the Townview Center for the Dallas Independent School District (Texas) is: What actually goes on inside a high school of the future is more important than what the school building will look like. The school's concept includes the housing of various magnet programs at one site. The architect is challenged to produce a design that encourages students to explore their interests more thoroughly. In the beginning the school site will be composed of eight schools and will allow for natural expansion. The project's goal and philosophy states that instructional programs will provide for "flexible program entry, mastery and exit." The design of the school space is to be developed to ensure that circulation among the schools is a continuous flow and that student activities are encouraged. Included are two sketches of the school design concept. (MD)

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"A High School for the 21st Century"

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What the high school of the future will look like is not as important as what goes on inside the school. This was the premise used in developing the concept for the new Townview Center for the Dallas Independent School District. Historically, the district's various Magnet Schools were housed in locations throughout the city. Once a student entered it was difficult to change from one school to another. The student was not aware of the other schools. The principals of the Magnets were reluctant to counsel a young person to make a change. The student was reluctant to move from a known educational environment to an unknown one.

Townview Center will bring various Magnet programs to one site. The concept calls for no "dead ends." The architect is challenged to design a series of "cul-de-sacs" so the student is encouraged to explore more thoroughly. Counselors are encouraged to suggest experimentation. When possible, requirements will be offered within the appropriate Magnet area so the student will enter the various schools. For instance, required science will be taught in the Science School, health in the School for Health Professions, and so on.

Technology is an important part of the Townview Center. The appropriate uses for micro and macro computers is part of the design.

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A HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

There will be no one blueprint for the high school of the 21st century. At last, we will have recognized that although there are certain basics needed for survival--the ability to read, the ability to write, the ability to use numbers--we will have at last realized the most important basic is the ability to think.

Once we have realized that, the form of the new centers for learning will evolve naturally. We will realize that all young people are not the same. We will realize that ambitions are personal. We will realize that the world has changed. We will stop underestimating the potential of our young people.

In 1967, John Goodlad wrote: "Proposals for improving (education) tend to emerge as discrete entities, usually far removed from the inner core of schooling--where teachers, students, and what is to be learned all come together. The meteors of change, however bright and shinning, too often lose their impetus long before they reach this inner core, fizzling out into scattered piles of ashes."

It was a desire to avoid this "pile of ashes" that could have been back of the Skyline Career Development Center which opened in Dallas in 1971 with a voluntary student body drawn from every high school in Dallas. The main difference in approach between Skyline and a technical high school is that the career development approach provides learning opportunities for both the student who plans to continue education beyond high school and the student who wishes to enter the job market immediately upon graduation.

An April 1976 federal court order mandated the opening of Magnet Schools. These schools were located in existing schools or "found" space in various areas of Dallas.

In 1983, the decision was made to bring these Magnets together on one site. The Arts Magnet remains in an existing building strategically located in the evolving Dallas Arts District.

When we at EFL looked at the existing Magnets and at Skyline two things stood out that influenced our thinking as we developed the concept for what is known as the Townview Center.

> First, on the dispersed sites the student could get locked into a program he or she no longer desired.
>
> Secondly, at the Skyline Career Center, the very design of the building discouraged exploration and interchange among the career clusters.

More about this later.

Townview Center is a school designed to take education into the twenty-first century for the Dallas Independent School District. It will be composed of the following schools:

Academics - Total - 2000
Business & Management - 700
(Computer Technology) - (150-200)
Education & Social Studies - 150-250
International Studies/Government & Law - 150
Health Professions - 600-700
Science/Engineering - 150-250
(Talented and Gifted) - (150)

As additional schools are identified, the concept calls for a natural expansion.

The philosophy of the Dallas Independent School District recognizes the worth of every child in the community and causes the District to strive to provide all young persons with learning opportunities that will assist them in discovering and utilizing their individual interests, aptitudes, and abilities. Current belief is that a part of this discovery should include preparation for a life of productive and satisfying work.

We developed a list of goals and a philosophy. Perhaps the most important statement is: "to design and implement instructional programs which provide for flexible program entry, mastery, and exit."

Entry, Mastery, and Exit.

These three words and what they imply served to guide us in the development of the basic concept for Townview.

The space relationship sketch is intended to indicate a broad concept. It does, however, suggest that certain areas--central administration, the academic center, student activities and various shared facilities--would be off a main traffic artery. The six identified schools (Academic and Talented and Gifted not identified as Magnets) could be thought of as being located in cul-de-sacs off the main artery with space for additional educational cul-de-sacs. Viewed this way, circulation to the schools never ends, but is a continuous flow in semi-circles and full circles always ending back at the main traffic artery.

Certain basic subjects will be offered in the specialized cluster. For instance, typing in the Business Cluster; health in the Health Professions; science in Science and Technology. An attempt is made to expose the Townview student to a wide range of opportunities offered. The staff--especially the counselors--will be charged with the responsibility of really listening if a Townview student suggests a change in direction is desired.

Student Activities are vitally important. It is hoped that the Student Activities area will become the gathering place or social center of Townview. There will be informal lounges in each school cul-de-sac, but will not be as "active" as this area nor provide the common ground for student interaction.

Student dining will be an important function. The imagination of the design can provide this space in a variety of ways: the formal coffee shop, the sandwich shop, the snack bar, for example. The option for indoor or outdoor seating will

be provided as well as a separate cafe for faculty dining.

Other uses of the Commons include assemblies, dances, plays or concerts. This is an active place. This is the plaza of a Mexican village or the town square of the United States. In real life, the new town square is the shopping mall.

How about physical education? There are no organized competitive sports recommended for Townview. Adjacent to the Commons with direct access to the outdoors is the Life-time Sport and Wellness Center. This is visualized as having space for handball, table tennis, group exercise, badminton, special equipment and other individual and small group activities.

Outside, tennis courts, a golf putting green, additional handball, shuffleboard and space for other like sports will be provided. The Center should have a hike and bike trail developed and the establishment of a "fitness trail" will be a possibility.

The computer center will be closely related to the Library/Media Center. The final design makes ultimate use of computers with the Business cluster and the Science-Engineering cluster closely related to the Computer Center.

Each school--or cluster--will have its own identity, yet not be isolated. To underline the concept--one of the purposes in bringing the programs on one site is to encourage student exploration and to make more possible movement among the various programs and schools. By grouping the programs and schools in no-dead-end cul-de-sacs, this interchange should be encouraged.

The challenge to the architect is to design a building and design a campus that encourages movement, avoids dead-ends and leads the student back to the main traffic artery where basic education and social development becomes a natural multi-discipline function. The Library/Media Center and Computer Center are focal points.

The diagram suggests that Townview is both an inward-looking and outward-looking campus. Within, basic and specialized learning takes place. The circling commuter bus is a constant reminder that Townview is part of DISD and the City of Dallas is always there to bring people to explore and learn; and to take people out to apply that learning.

The relationship diagram suggests that the Computer Center and the Library/Media Center be given a more central location. It is important, however, for the design of Townview to reflect the "open flow" concept as indicated by the Townview Center sketch. In addition, the social aspects must be kept in mind.

We felt that by program and by design, Townview should be a constant reminder that each specialized program is only one part of the campus, which in turn is only one part of the DISD educational offerings, which are only one part of the vitality of the city, state and nation.

The Townview Center will have six basic types of space:

* central administrative spaces
* classroom and auxiliary spaces
* large group spaces
* student activity areas
* specialized instructional spaces
* building services

The architect is charged with designing a functional and attractive school. There should also be special and "surprise" areas. These should make Townview Center capable of having the luxury of adapting to changes in educational approach which are now not known. The design should minimize the possibility of ending up with Goodlad's traditional "scattered pile of ashes."

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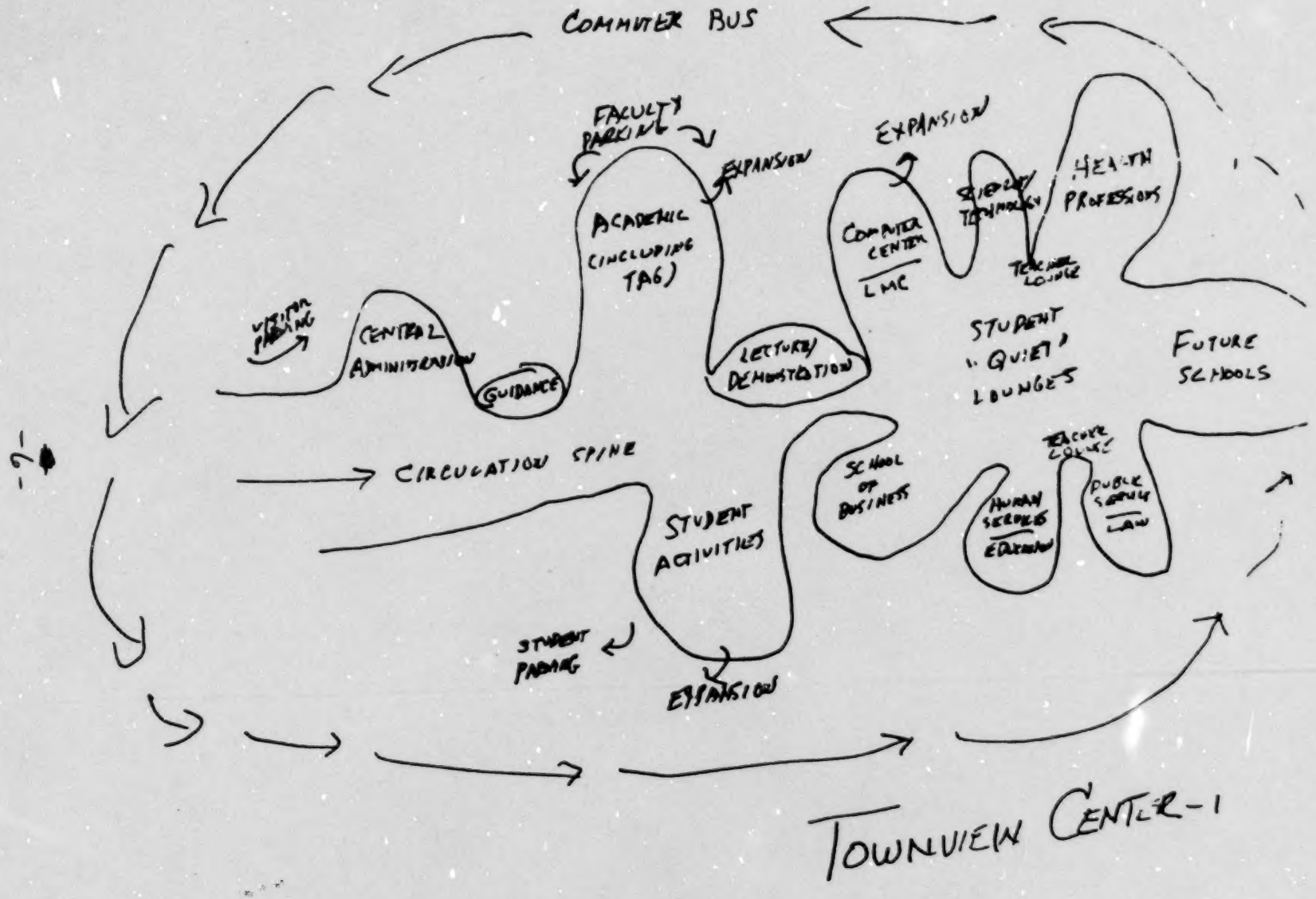

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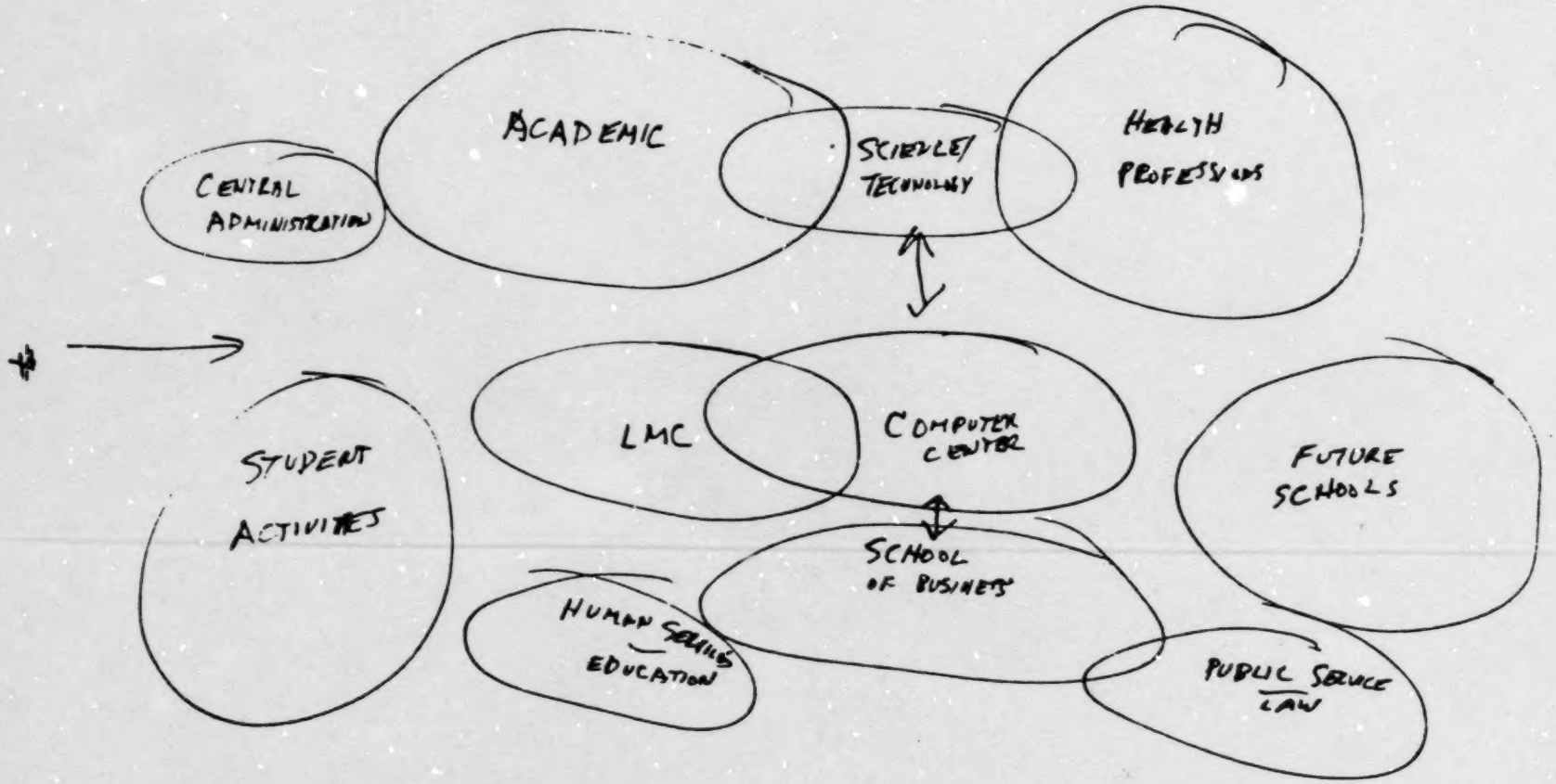

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